

CONGRESSMAN CHAKA FATTAH

Chaka Fattah is an experienced lawmaker serving in his fourth term in the U.S. House of Representatives. Congressman Fattah represents the **Second Congressional District of Pennsylvania**, which includes parts of Philadelphia and Delaware County, PA.

SHAPING EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Congressman Fattah has spearheaded major initiatives in education policy. After working to gain bi-partisan support from members of the House, Congressman Fattah scored a legislative victory when his first major education initiative, **GEAR UP**, was passed in 1998. GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) partners students from low-income schools with colleges and universities to help build an education pipeline for students to realize their college dreams. Including this fiscal year, there are 251 university partnerships and 28 state programs serving nearly 1.3 million students. Policy experts point to GEAR UP as one of the most innovative educational programs. The **William H. Gray College Completion Grant** is another Fattah legislative achievement designed to help nearly 18,000 low-income minority students successfully complete college. This program aims to retain college students by offering resources to help them complete college and be fully prepared for success in the workforce or in graduate school. To date, GEAR UP and the College Completion Grant have received nearly \$700 million in total combined funding.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

In the 107th Congress, Congressman Fattah has been elected to the **Appropriations Committee**. This committee oversees \$600 billion in discretionary spending annually. As a member of this committee, Fattah serves on the **Subcommittee on VA-HUD & Independent Agencies**, and is the ranking member on the **Subcommittee on the District of Columbia**. Fattah is the youngest of the thirteen ranking Democrats currently serving on any of the Appropriations subcommittees. He is also the second ranking Democrat on the **Committee on House Administration**.

SUPPORTING SOUND LEGISLATION

Congressman Fattah supported the **Reauthorization to the Higher Education Act**, a measure that increased student aid, lowered interest rates on student loans and improved the quality of teaching in our nation's schools. Congressman Fattah assumed a key role in the development and negotiation of portions of the **Workforce Investment Partnership Act of 1998**, appropriated at \$5.7 billion for FY 2001. Fattah played a crucial role in the negotiations of the youth opportunity grants, a section authorizing \$1.1 billion over five years to direct resources to high-poverty areas, as well as increasing employment and school completion rates for low-income youth.

While education continues to be at the forefront of Congressman Fattah's legislative agenda, he has also been a prime co-sponsor of major initiatives in an array of public policy areas. In the 106th Congress, Fattah supported and co-sponsored the **African Growth and Opportunity Act**, a bill created to stimulate and sustain economic development in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean. Fattah supported many initiatives that became public law in the 105th Congress, including: the **Drug Free Communities Act of 1997**, a program supporting 307 communities located in forty-nine states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands that provides funds and resources to help local leaders prevent drug problems affecting youth. Congressman Fattah was also a prime co-sponsor of the **District of Columbia Financial and Management Assistance Act**, which became public law in 1995. This measure helped the District regain its financial stability, and since its enactment the city has produced four consecutive balanced budgets.

CURRENT POLICY INITIATIVES

Congressman Fattah's top legislative priority is his Student Bill of Rights, which he announced on the 48th anniversary of *Brown vs. Board of Education*. The Student Bill of Rights will require States to certify with the Secretary of Education that their Public School System operates on an equal statewide basis in terms of offering all students access to some of the proven educational inputs necessary to achieve high academic outcomes. Therefore, for the first time ever, states will have an annual report card by which to be judged on for their ability to provide educational resources for all students.

Congressman Fattah's seven fundamentals for learning include: **1) Instruction from a highly qualified teacher; 2) Rigorous academic standards, curricula and methods of instruction; 3) Small class sizes; 4) Up-to-date textbooks; 5) Up-to-date libraries; 6) Up-to-date computers; 7) Quality guidance counseling.**

On an annual basis, The Student Bill of Rights will also **publicly identify** those states not providing these educational resources and penalize them with a loss of federal dollars if they do not comply.

COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE

Experienced in all three levels of government—local, state and federal—Congressman Fattah spent 12 years in the **Pennsylvania Legislature**; he served six years as a state representative, and six years as a state senator. Congressman Fattah has held key leadership roles in both the **Pennsylvania Higher Education Facilities Authority** and the **Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency**, roles in which he helped 1.3 million students from Pennsylvania attend college. In 1986, he founded the annual **Fattah Conference on Higher Education**, which has motivated thousands of students to pursue graduate school opportunities. In addition, Fattah designed and implemented “**Read to Lead,**” a free summer reading program that provided books and classroom teaching for 5,000 children. Congressman Fattah is co-chair of the **Friends of the Caribbean Caucus**, a caucus created to address the needs and policy concerns of the Caribbean nations. In addition, Congressman Fattah co-chaired the **Web-based Education Commission**, which made recommendations into how the Internet is being used to enhance learning opportunities for all learners from pre-kindergarten through high school. He has served as a member of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education, on the Board of Trustees for Lincoln University, Temple University, Pennsylvania State University and Community College of Philadelphia. Congressman Fattah has been identified by *Time Magazine* as one of the 50 most promising leaders in the country, and has been a guest on NBC’s *Meet the Press* and MSNBC’s *Hardball*.

BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

A life-long resident of Philadelphia, Congressman Fattah attended city public schools, the Community College of Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School, and the University of Pennsylvania Fels School of State and Local Government where he earned a Master’s Degree in Government Administration. He also completed the Senior Executive Program for State Officials at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. Congressman Fattah is married to Renee Chenault-Fattah, and has a family of three children. His oldest daughter is a lawyer, his son is completing his sophomore year in college, and his youngest daughter is a toddler.